

Prize, a prestigious award given to the most talented young British artists, and whose pieces have sold for tens of thousands of dollars. Whatever you may think of the subject matter, this is a serious exhibition of work by serious artists, displayed in a respected museum.

Supporters of this resolution will claim that they believe in the right of these artists to show their work, but that American taxpayers should not have to pay for an exhibit like this. Well, let me point out very clearly, that the taxpayers are not paying for this exhibition. No federal money went to show this exhibit. Not a dime. The Brooklyn Museum receives federal money, but the money it receives goes directly to pay for educational initiatives and touring exhibitions. Do we want to cut off these worthy programs because we don't like one piece of art that the Museum has chosen to display? That would make no sense.

So this resolution is foolish in substance.

But this resolution is foolish, and I would say dangerous, in principle. What have we come to when the United States Congress is condemning an individual for exercising his right to free expression? I thought our book burning days were over. What's next? Will we be closing down our public libraries because they contain books that we don't like? I don't like every book in the library, but I'm glad they're there. Will we attack the libraries for having a copy of *Mein Kampf*, Hitler's autobiography, which offends people's sensibilities? Where does it end?

This exhibit is shocking. It's outrageous. Art has been called a lot worse since the beginning of time. But that's the point of art. It's meant to provoke debate and discussion. Good art makes us confront our own cultural norms. Does this exhibit fit my own artistic tastes? Maybe not. But will I defend the right of artists to express themselves and the right of the museum to bring various kinds of artistic expression to the public? You bet.

But, this is not about one exhibit. This is about whether you support free expression and creativity or not. If you support the first amendment, you find yourself fighting to the end to defend the rights of people you find offensive. We would set a very dangerous precedent here if we vote for this resolution. For the United States Congress to single out one museum and one artist as sacrilegious and then to hold the museum hostage to the tastes of the Gentlemen from New York as a condition of receiving federal funds is outrageous. Politicians should not be deciding what is art. We've debated in this House many times whether the federal government should be subsidizing art. I believe we should, and there are many who disagree. But if we do decide to subsidize art, as we have for over 35 years, we must do so without interfering in the content. If every arts institution must suddenly worry that their exhibitions will not satisfy the 435 art critics in the House of Representatives, it will create a chilling effect in the cultural world.

Frankly, I'm disappointed in my colleagues from New York who are supporting this resolution. New York is the capital of the art world, where we have a tradition of respecting the free expression of artists. If you don't like this exhibit, protest it, boycott the museum. Best of all, stay home and don't see it. But you don't need a Congressional Resolution to express personal outrage. It is improper and out-

rageous and it should be defeated. I urge my colleagues to vote against it.

Mr. PACKARD. Mr. Speaker, I would like to strongly urge my colleagues to support the sense of Congress resolution which prohibits Federal funding of the Brooklyn Museum of Art unless they discontinue the exhibit which features works of a sacrilegious nature. Thomas Jefferson once said, "to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves and abhors is sinful and tyrannical".

Art is certainly in the eye of the beholder. It is not the role of Congress to determine what is art, but it is the role of Congress to determine what taxpayer money will fund. The First Amendment protects the government from silencing voices that we may not agree with, but it does not require us to subsidize them.

Mr. Speaker, again I urge my colleagues to join me in expressing a sense of Congress that while we support everyone's right to express themselves artistically, we are not obligated to support them financially.

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GIBBONS). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, House Concurrent Resolution 191, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The title of the concurrent resolution was amended so as to read: "Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the Brooklyn Museum of Art should not receive Federal funds unless it closes its exhibit featuring works of a sacrilegious nature."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on House Concurrent Resolution 191.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from South Carolina?

There was no objection.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON H.R. 2684, DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 2684) making appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30,

2000, and for other purposes, with a Senate amendment thereto, disagree to the Senate amendment, and agree to the conference asked by the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT OFFERED BY MR. MOLLOHAN

Mr. MOLLOHAN. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion to instruct.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. MOLLOHAN moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the bill, H.R. 2684, be instructed to agree with the higher funding levels recommended in the Senate amendment for the Department of Housing and Urban Development; for the Science, Aeronautics and Technology and Mission Support accounts of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration; and for the National Science Foundation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOLLOHAN) will be recognized for 30 minutes, and the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) will be recognized for 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOLLOHAN).

Mr. MOLLOHAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, my motion instructs the House conferees to agree to the Senate's funding levels in three areas: The overall budget for HUD; NASA's Science, Aeronautics, and Technology and Mission Support Accounts; and the overall budget for the National Science Foundation.

In each case, the Senate funding levels are higher than those for the House in this VA-HUD appropriations bill. I am moving to instruct conferees to adopt the higher numbers for these programs because these are all areas in which the House bill made excessive cuts. For HUD and NASA, the House-passed bill reduced appropriations substantially below the current year's level, as well as substantially below the request. For NSF, the House bill cut funding a bit below the fiscal year 1999 level and well below the President's request. In each case, the House-passed levels would do serious damage to important programs and are completely unwarranted at a time when the economy and the budget are in the best shape they have been for decades.

When we considered the VA-HUD bill on the floor this year, many Members, Republicans as well as Democrats, raised serious concerns about the cuts being made, especially in HUD, NASA, and the National Science Foundation. The managers of the bill, myself included, promised to do all we could to bring about more adequate funding for these accounts in conference. This motion represents a step toward that result. Its adoption by the House would strengthen our position in trying to assure at least minimally adequate funding for high priority items.